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BAPTISM
ITS NATURE AND USE

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ARGUMENTS
USED BY PERSEPOLITES

ABRIDGED FROM THE WRITINGS OF EMINENT DIVINES

THE REV. ANDREW GRAY.

HALIFAX, N. S.
PRINTED BY T. CHAMBERLAIN, 176 ARCADE STREET.
1864.

BAPTISM :
ITS NATURE AND SUBJECTS ;

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ARGUMENTS GENERALLY
USED BY PEDOBAPTISTS.

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THE following Essay has been prepared especially for the benefit of common readers, and for those who cannot afford to procure large treatises.

THE AUTHOR.

LUNENBURG, 1864.

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BAPTISM.

For many years, this subject has been prolific of much controversy in the church. Many have fearlessly expressed their opinions with regard to it; they had a right to do so, and we claim, for ourselves, the privilege to do so too. But when we reflect upon the great number, extensive erudition, and eminent piety of the divines who have been enrolled on either side in this controversy, we are at once admonished of the propriety of caution and calmness in the investigation of this subject, and of respectful forbearance of feeling towards those with whom we differ in judgment. Yet, at the same time, as this is a subject upon which the Bible is by no means silent, and which must be decided by that book alone, and as it is made the duty of all to "search the Scriptures" for themselves, we may venture, in the fear of God, impartially to examine for ourselves, and to bring the points at issue to the test of reason and of Scripture.

I. THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

Baptism, as a Christian ordinance, is the application of pure water to a proper subject, by a lawful administrator, in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is worthy of remark, that as the commission to baptize was given to ministers of the gospel alone, no others have a right to perform this office. Here, it will be necessary to consider *two* things,—Its universal obligation, and Its sacramental import.

1. That baptism is of universal and perpetual obligation may be proved, (1.) *From our Lord's express command.*—He said to His apostles, "Go ye, therefore and teach—*μαθητεύσατε*, disciple—all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching—*διδάσκοντες*—them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19—20.

This passage contains a command,—to make disciples of all nations, and two directions regarding the way in which it is to be accomplished: 1. By baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity; and, 2, By teaching them to observe whatsoever Christ had commanded. It is clearly

implied in this passage, that baptism is to be co-extensive with the preaching of the gospel, and to be continued "to the end of the world."

(2.) *From the words of Christ to Nicodemus*,—"Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John iii. 5. By the phrase "*born of water*," our Lord clearly refers to baptism, and recognizes it as an ordinance of His religion. Though we would not affirm that no man can be saved without baptism, yet we believe Christ clearly teaches, in the passage just quoted, that this is the regularly instituted means by which we make a public profession of His religion and enter his visible kingdom. We may add here, that those who have been baptized with water—having been brought into covenant relation with God—other things being equal—are much more likely to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost than those who have not.

(3.) *From the practice of the apostles*.—The history of the Church shows that the apostles invariably baptized all who believed, and their households. Thus, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, exhorts the people, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." Acts ii. 38, 41.

"But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts viii. 12.

If we can show,—as we hope to do, when we come to speak of the subjects of baptism—that infants are scriptural subjects for that ordinance, then it will follow that, for parents to neglect the baptism of their children, is to sin against God, by the omission or neglect of a duty which they owe to God and to their offspring. How very guilty are those persons of our day, who, though they have been instructed regarding the *perpetual* and *universal* obligation of baptism, regard it as a matter of trivial importance whether baptism be administered or not.

We may remark here, that as *parents* are required to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, sponsors are not to be admitted while the parents are yet living, except in cases of *adoption* or something tantamount thereto.

2. *Baptism in its sacramental character, is the initiatory ordinance into the visible Church of Christ; and a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.*

(1.) Baptism is *initiatory*, inasmuch as by it we are received into the visible Church of Christ, confess Him before men, and thereby enter into covenant engagements with Him as our Saviour and Lord. *As it is*

initiatory, it is, of course, but once to be administered, and we regard the repetition of it as being little less than blasphemous. Why, then, it will be asked, did the Apostle baptize again those who had been baptized by John? Acts xix. 1—7. The answer is obvious,—To be a *Christian*, a man must be baptized in the *Christian faith*: these persons had not been baptized into that faith—having received *only* John's baptism, which was not Christian—and therefore were not Christians: they felt this, and immediately were baptized *into the name of the Lord Jesus*. This is a plain case; but let one instance be produced of a person being rebaptized, who had *before* been baptized in the name of the *holy Trinity*, or even in the *name of Jesus* alone!

The repetition of baptism is totally contrary to the canon law; it is contrary to the decision of the best divines; it is contrary to the practice of the purest ages of the Church; it is contrary to the New Testament, and tends to bring this sacred ordinance into disrepute. Of such importance is baptism, however, that in doubtful cases, when it cannot be satisfactorily ascertained whether the individual has been baptized or not, or if strong objections arise regarding the validity of such baptism, which cannot be satisfactorily settled, the minister may use the *element*, as the "Church of England" directs, in the use of the following words,—“If thou art not already baptized, N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And perhaps it should be observed just here, that as the ordinance is a public one, *it should, if at all possible, be administered in public*. Jesus Christ was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, Luke ii. 22, and why should not equal importance be attached to the *public* administration of baptism in our day? The following is the amount of a clause in the “Book of Common Prayer,”—“The Curates shall warn parents and guardians that they suffer not their children to be baptized at home in their houses, without *great cause and necessity*, which shall compel them so to do.” This public baptism has been regarded as a ceremony of initiation in all ages of the Christian church.

(2) *Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace*.—As a *sign* it holds out to our view all the provisions and promises of the covenant of grace. The *sign* in baptism is water, wherewith the person is baptized; the thing signified is the cleansing of the soul, from guilt and pollution, and the renewing of our nature by the Holy Ghost. As water is employed to cleanse the body from external pollution, so it is apparently used as the symbol of that gracious influence whereby the soul is cleansed and renewed. And as baptism is an acknowledgment of the pollution and guilt in which we are involved, it is also a recognition of the

cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

The promise of God is,—“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.” Isa. xlv: 3. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezek. xxxvi. 25—26. As a *sign*, baptism is especially emblematical of that effusion of the Spirit which is peculiar to the Gospel dispensation. This is, probably, one of the principal reasons why it was substituted for circumcision; for in baptism by *affusion*—the New Testament mode of baptizing—we have a natural symbol of this heavenly gift. Accordingly, the pouring out of the “spirit upon all flesh,” which is spoken of by Joel, is in the New Testament called a *baptism*. Indeed, when baptism is administered by *affusion*, we have a true representation of the *pouring out* of the Spirit, the *descending* of the Spirit, and the *falling* of the Spirit upon men.

As a *seal*, it is on the part of God, a visible assurance of faithfulness to His covenant stipulations. Thus, He condescends to bind Himself by a perpetual ceremony, to which the weak and wavering may ever appeal, as a sensible pledge of his unwavering fidelity.

It is our *seal* also. It is that act whereby we make ourselves a party to the covenant, and thus “set to our seal that God is true.” In this respect it binds *us*, as, in the other, *God* mercifully binds Himself, for the stronger assurance of our faith.

How sacred are the obligations of baptized persons! The vows of God are upon them. How guilty if they do not keep the covenant.

(3.) *Baptism is not regeneration*.—Here let it be understood,—we regard “the new birth” and “regeneration” as synonymous expressions—we mean that great change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus, when it is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. 2 Cor. v. 17. John iii. 3.

We read in Acts x. 46—48, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” This passage clearly proves, that men may receive the Holy Ghost, and consequently may be regenerated without being baptized. Baptism, therefore, cannot be the *regenerating act*—that is affected by the power of the Almighty.

Baptism, as we have before shown, is the appointed emblem, of the great change, effected by the Spirit's agency upon the soul, in preparing it for admission into the pure regions of heaven. It is on this account that our Lord connects together in his discourse with Nicodemus, *be being born of water and born of the Spirit.* John iii. 5.—the one the sign, the other the gracious change which it signifies—the *former* is necessary for an entrance into *the kingdom of God on earth*, i. e. the visible Church of Christ,—the *latter*, for our admission to *the mystical Church*, the blessed company of all faithful people on earth and in glory. It is on this account that St. Paul speaks in the same connection of "*the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" Titus iii. 5.

The great apostle unequivocally asserts that this inward change does not consist in any external rite, and that no outward act can be substituted for it. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, *but a new creature.*" Gal. vi. 15. To assert that the sprinkling of water is the renewing of the Spirit, is to undermine the whole scheme upon which the doctrine of regeneration is founded, viz., the atonement of Christ, the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost, and the economy of grace.

It is true we read, Acts ii. 38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now this passage, so far from supporting the idea that "baptism," and "the gift of the Holy Ghost" are synonymous terms, rather proves that baptism, as an act whereby we publicly profess faith in Christ, when connected with evangelical repentance, is, to a certain extent, instrumental in regeneration.

II. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. *All believers in Christ who have not been baptized.* That faith in Christ is a prerequisite—in the case of an adult—in order to baptism, will appear from the language of Philip; the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip responded, "If thou *believest* with all thine heart thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts viii. 36, 37. In the present day, no pedobaptist would administer baptism to a Heathen, Mohammedan, or Jew, till he had first "preached unto him Jesus;" then, upon the profession of his faith in Christ, he would baptize "himself and his household." That believers are proper subjects for this

ordinance will appear from the following Scriptures,—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Mark xvi. 16. “Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” Acts x. 46—48.

2. *All subjects of evangelical repentance, who have not been baptized before, are suitable subjects for this sacrament.*

In the passage last quoted, we have an account of persons asking what they should do, that they might be saved. Peter enjoins upon them to “Repent and be baptized.” At the time of this injunction they were not the subjects of *repentance*, but only of *conviction*—“they were pricked in the heart”—and when they repented, “gladly receiving his words,” they were baptized.

3. *The infant children of believing parents are Scriptural subjects for the sacrament of baptism.*

I use the word *believing* as it was frequently used at the first propagation of the gospel. A believer, at that time, often meant nothing more than, one who acknowledged one true God, and professed faith in the Messiah, in opposition to an infidel or idolater; but let no one suppose that this *alone* is the faith spoken of in the New Testament, which is made the *instrumental cause* of our justification. That the broad assertion, which we have made regarding the infant offspring of such parents, is correct, will appear from the following arguments:—

1. FROM THEIR BEING ADMITTED TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF GOD UNDER THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. That the force of this argument may appear, we notice—

(1.) *The Church of God took its visible form in the Abrahamic covenant.*—That that covenant was the *general covenant of grace*, and not wholly, or even chiefly, a political or national one, is evident from the terms in which it is expressed. “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of the country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xii. 1—3. “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between

me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face ; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram ; but thy name shall be Abraham ; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." Gen. xvii. 1—8. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies : And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Gen. xxii. 17, 18. We notice here, that the first engagement in this covenant was, that God would *greatly bless* Abraham. That this promise comprehended temporal blessings we do not deny ; but that it referred more particularly to a spiritual blessing—that of justification by the imputation of his faith for righteousness, with all the spiritual blessings concomitant therewith, and consequent therefrom—St. Paul satisfactorily shows, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. iii. 14.

The second promise in the covenant was, "that he should be a father of many nations ;" which, according to St. Paul, refers more particularly to his spiritual seed than to his natural descendants. "That, the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Rom. iv. 16.

The third promise was, "to be a God unto Abraham, and to his seed after him," a promise which implies the highest spiritual blessings, such as the remission of sins and the sanctification of our nature ; as also a visible Church state. It is even used to express the felicitous state of the Church in heaven. "And God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Rev. xxi. 3.

The fourth stipulation in this covenant was, to give to the patriarch and to his seed after him "all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." This was more than a temporal promise, being the type of the higher promise of a heavenly inheritance.

Hence St. Paul says, "By *faith* he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." But this faith did not respect merely the fulfilment of the *temporal* promise; for the apostle adds, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. ii. 9, 10.

The final engagement in the covenant was, that in the seed of Abraham "all the nations of the earth should be blessed." And St. Paul shows that this blessing was nothing less than the justification of all believers in all nations, by faith in Christ: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii. 8, 9.

This covenant, therefore, though it had respect to a national seed, *Isaac*, from whom a numerous progeny was to spring, and to an earthly inheritance, *the land of Canaan*, provided for this issue, was nevertheless, under these temporal advantages, to all intents and purposes *the covenant of grace*. This covenant was perpetuated in its visible form by that special covenant which God made with the descendants of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, whom He acknowledged as His visible Church.

(2.) *Of the Abrahamic Covenant, circumcision was the sign and seal.*—The children of Jewish parents, under the former dispensation, were not only allowed to be circumcised, *but were positively required to be so*, under penalty of excision from that covenant. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep; between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 10—14.

This rule continued from the time of Abraham, throughout all the Jewish dispensation, till the time of Christ.

"Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him." Gen. xxi. 4. And Christ was circumcised on the

eighth day. "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called *JESUS*." Luke ii. 21. The great apostle of the Gentiles was circumcised also. He says of himself that he was "circumcised the eighth day." Phil. iii. 5. At the end of the Jewish, and commencement of the Christian dispensation, though the covenant remained the same—as we shall presently show—yet the sign and seal were changed.

(3.) *The Christian Church is a continuation of the Jewish—and that the covenant under which we live is the same that God gave to Abraham*, will appear from the following considerations:—*First*, the covenant was to be *everlasting*. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*." Gen. xvii. 7. *Secondly*, Abraham is recognized in the sacred Scriptures as the father of all true believers. Thus St. Paul tells us "he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be *the father of all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumcised." Rom. iv. 11, 12. *Thirdly*, that Christ came to sit—spiritually and ecclesiastically—upon the throne of David. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever." Isa. ix. 7. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke i. 68—75. These passages are so clear, full and explicit, as unmistakably to show the intimate connexion between the covenant which God made with Abraham and the Gospel dispensation. Accordingly, Christ claimed the Jews for his own people. "He came unto his own." John i. 12. *Fourthly*, the Abrahamic covenant was not annulled by the promulgation of the Gospel, but was thereby extended to all nations, according to its original intention.

Hence the visible Church of God, which for ages had been confined to a single nation, instead of being dissolved, was opened for the reception of the believing Gentiles, without any respect to any national distinctions. St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, compares the believing portion of the Jewish Church—the true sons of Abraham—to a “good olive tree.” By the breaking off of some of its natural branches he represents the rejection of the unbelieving Jews; and by the grafting in of others from the wild olive-tree, the reception of the believing Gentiles. In all this it is taken for granted by the apostle that the “good olive tree”—the true Abrahamic church—is still standing. He, therefore, adds, that if the broken-off branches—the unbelieving Jews—“abide not still in unbelief,” they shall be united again to *their own olive tree*. Thus the unity of the Church under the former and the present dispensation is fully established. Indeed, the covenant which God made with Abraham was an epitome of the gospel. Hence the Apostle says, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Gal. iii. 8.

(4.) *Baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and is to the present dispensation, what circumcision was to the Jewish.*—That baptism has precisely the same federal and initiatory character as circumcision, and that it was instituted for the same ends, and in its place, we have abundant proof in Col. ii. 10—12: “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by *the circumcision of Christ*, buried with him in *baptism*.” Here, the apostle not only shows that baptism is the initiatory rite of the new dispensation, when he says, “in whom also ye are circumcised,” but, also, that it has the same office under the Christian, that circumcision had under the Jewish dispensation; for he expressly calls it “the circumcision of Christ,”—a hebraism, meaning *Christian circumcision*. That baptism has the same office and importance as circumcision anciently had, will satisfactorily appear from Gal. iii. 27—29: “For as many of you as have been baptized *into Christ*, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s”—by thus being *baptized* and by *putting on Christ*—“then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The argument is decisive. It was by circumcision, believingly received, that strangers or heathens, as well as Jews, became the spiritual “seed

of Abraham," and heirs of the same spiritual and heavenly promises. But in this passage the very same office is ascribed to baptism; the conclusion is therefore inevitable, that baptism is to us what circumcision was to the Jews. This view is corroborated by the consideration that both these rites are symbolical of the same moral change. St. Paul tells us that "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 29. In like manner he speaks of baptism as emblematical of a death unto sin, and a new spiritual life. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. vi. 4.

To the substitution of baptism for circumcision it is sometimes objected that as the latter was restricted to males, the former would be placed under the same restriction, if it had been substituted for circumcision. This objection, however, can have no force, except with the uninformed. Circumcision and baptism are both what we denominate *positive* institutions. Who then will dare to affirm that God had not a right to determine the circumstances under which they should be signs and seals of his covenant?

Let us now sum up the argument and see whether it does not amount to a *Scriptural warrant* for the practice of infant baptism. It has been shown that the Abrahamic covenant was the general covenant of grace; that children were embraced in that covenant, and were admitted into the visible Church by circumcision; that Christianity is a continuation, under another form, of that covenant which God made with Abraham; and that baptism is now the sign and seal of the covenant of grace—under the Christian dispensation—as circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation.

Surely it follows from the foregoing, that as the infant children of believing parents, were proper subjects for circumcision, under the Old Testament, so the infant children of believing parents, are proper subjects for baptism in New Testament times. To us, however, there need be no stronger proof of this, than is found in the "great commission" itself, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and—*μαθητεύσατε*—disciple all nations, *baptizing* them," &c. Now do not infants belong to nations? Are they not included in the word *nations*? Does not the greater always include the less? If so, and who can deny it? when why deny infants the rite of baptism? when Jesus commanded them to be baptized. The only means whereby this argument can be set aside, is the adduction of some scriptural prohibition of infant baptism. But such a prohibition does not exist; and this single fact is a sufficient proof, under the circumstances of the case, that infants have a right to this sacrament.

We never read of a Jew complaining of the new dispensation, on the

ground, that under it, his children would not have privileges equal to those enjoyed by them under Judaism. The reason is obvious,—the cause for such complaint did not exist.

To prohibit infants from entering into God's covenant by baptism, when they had always been entitled to enter into it by circumcision, is therefore a censurable interference with the authority of God—a presumptuous attempt to fashion the new dispensation, in this respect, so as to conform to mere human opinions.

We might, if necessary, use an argument—strong and long—in favour of infant baptism,

2. FROM SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY. We shall however make use of but two single passages. The first is Mark x. 14. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." This passage has been adduced as direct and unequivocal testimony—not that these children spoken of were brought to Christ for baptism—but, that *children belong to the kingdom of God*. And if they *belong* to His kingdom, they should not be refused the sign. The second passage is Acts ii. 39. "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." In order to perceive the bearing of this passage upon the question before us, it is only necessary to consider the resemblance there is between the declaration of Peter—"the promise is to you and to your children"—and the promise of God to Abraham. This resemblance is seen in two particulars: 1. Each stands connected with an ordinance by which persons were to be admitted into the visible Church; in the one case, by circumcision, in the other, by baptism. 2. Both agree in phraseology.

The one is, "unto thee, and to thy seed"; the other, "unto you, and to your children." Every one knows that *seed* and *children* are terms of the same import. It follows, therefore, from these two points of resemblance, that the subjects in both cases are the same; and as it is certain that in the promise of God to Abraham both parents and infant children were included, it must be equally certain that both are included in the announcement of Peter. Here is, then, another *warrant* for infant baptism. It is sometimes urged, by way of objection, that if infants are baptized they should also be admitted to the Lord's Supper. To this we reply, that as baptism is passively received, it may be administered to all infants; but to partake of the "Lord's supper" requires an agency of which many of them are physically incapable. Again, as the Lord's supper is to be a memorial to each participant, infants are intellectually incapable of receiving it according to its intention. To this we have an exact parallel in the Jewish passover; and though Jewish children were circumcised at eight days old, yet they did not eat the passover till they could comprehend its design.

3. FROM APOSTOLIC PRACTICE. All the evidence arising from apostolic practice—and there is at least presumptive evidence—is in favour of infant baptism. The Apostles baptized the *households* of Lydia, of the Philippian jailor, of Crispus, and of Stephanus. See Acts xvi. 13, 33; xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 16.

We may remark here, that the word *οικος*, rendered *house* and *household*, means—1st, The house or dwelling in which a family resides; 2nd, household affairs, housewifery; 3rd, *a household, family, the inmates of the house*; 4th, a house or race, as “the house of David.” Therefore, whatever testimony arises from this source is in favour of infant baptism. Indeed, by nullifying infant baptism, all baptism is nullified, as we have no proof of a regular succession of adult baptisms from the days of Christ.

We come finally to the—

4. TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS. That the practice of infant baptism has existed in the Church for many centuries is a fixed fact that no one will deny who has any knowledge of ecclesiastical history. It must therefore be allowed, either that this practice was established by the apostles themselves, and from them handed down to us, or that it was introduced at a period subsequent to apostolic times. If the latter be assumed, we may then be allowed to ask, When and where did the practice commence? Who introduced it? Who opposed it? By what council was it adopted? To these questions no answer can be given, if it be denied that it was established by the apostles and handed down to us.

That it was generally practiced in the Church in the first centuries of the Christian era, is supported by the most ample testimony.

(1.) JUSTIN MARTYR, a learned Samaritan, wrote about forty years after the death of St. John, who was the last of the apostles. Justin says, “we are circumcised by baptism, with Christ’s circumcision.” Again: “Many persons among us, of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, were made *disciples* to Christ in childhood.

(2.) ORIGEN, born about the year A. D. 185,—a man of as much information as any other in his day—descended from a long line of Christian ancestry. He says, “Besides all this,”—evidence of original sin—“let it be considered what is the reason that whereas the baptism of the Church is given for the forgiveness of sins, *infants* also according to the usage of the Church are baptized: when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be superfluous to them.” Again: “The Church hath received the tradition from the apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants.”

(3.) EPIRUS, an African bishop, about the middle of the third century, applied to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, to know if, in a case of necessity, an infant might be baptized before it was eight days old. The question

was referred to a council of *sixty-six* bishops met in Carthage, who decided *unanimously* that infants might be baptized at any time.

(4.) AUGUSTINE, who lived in the fourth century, says, "The whole Church practices infant baptism. It was not instituted by Councils, but was always in use." Again: "I do not remember to have read of any person, whether Catholic or heretic, who maintained that baptism ought to be denied to infants."

(5.) PELAGIUS, a man of great learning, about the close of the fourth century, after having travelled through France, Italy and Egypt, says, "I never heard of even an impious heretic who asserted that infants are not to be baptized." The testimony of this writer will appear the more convincing, when we consider that he denied the doctrine of "original sin."

We think it impossible to account for these testimonies—and we might have used many more—upon rational principles, without admitting that the practice of infant baptism has come down to us from the days of the Apostles.

If persons want to read more largely, on this subject, we refer them to the works from which much of this has been extracted, viz., "Dr. Wall's Treatise," "Hibbard on Baptism," "Thorn on the Subjects of Baptism," and many "Systems of Divinity," particularly "Wakefield's Christian Theology."

We observe by way of conclusion, that God no where *promises* to save or bless those who have not been brought into covenant with Himself. Baptism, as we have shown, is that sacramental rite whereby persons are brought into covenant with God—and all unbaptized persons, whether infants or adults, occupy precisely the same position in relation to the Christian Church, that the Gentiles or heathens did to Judaism. Loving mother, can you deny to your child the sacrament of baptism; when by such denial you exclude it from a claim to the blessings of the "covenant of grace?" With regard to the mode for the administration of this ordinance, we have nothing more to say, at present, than that candid and intelligent persons should consider the matter for themselves—and, we are convinced, that when they see the resemblance between the mode of the Spirit's baptism—"pouring out," "*falling upon* &c," and baptism by *affusion*, they will conclude that it should be administered by *sprinkling* or *pouring*. We have written for the benefit of all, and earnestly pray that all who read these pages may be baptized not only with water, but also with the Holy Ghost.

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